

People keep asking for my views on our industry.

Well here goes from my simple view.

The Bodyshops are struggling to stay alive let alone make a decent living; we are just another cog in the supply chain for our paymasters.

We are caught in a rut we cant operate without work and the work we have relied on for years has become non profitable, our costs keep going up and labour rate increases do not follow, we know our labour rates are vastly reduced and some contracts totally un workable unless you can push through a certain number of units.

We always blame the work providers for this. However, if we are honest we all have at some time fallen into the honey trap and before you know it you let all of the smaller work providers drop off because one or two dominate your business. I have been there and it's all roses in the garden until you realise your working really hard and making very little profit. Now we are on the treadmill we have increased productivity taken on more staff to cover demand and invested heavily in new equipment we are now driven by the need for volume and so on. The work providers are running a business just like anyone else they want the job done by qualified people for the cheapest price possible and that's why the labour rates remain so low compared to any mechanical workshop.

Getting out of this situation is really hard and requires planning and determination, there is no quick fix to this and if anyone tells you there is one I would like to meet them.

At the moment everyone is busy and yes they will make money for a few months while the weather is bad but it won't be long before we get to the summer months and people will then start marketing to get more work, classic peak troth scenario.

Marketing should be an all year round project and should be separate from the normal day to day running of a bodyshop to be profitable you need a steady stream of work all of the time from a mixture of insurance / accident managers and the retail public and no one work provider being more than 20% of your business easy to say I know but it is possible and some of our customers have made that transition.

It's not easy and requires lots of time and a structured approach; each bodyshop is different and their needs vary dramatically from one to another.

Any thing is possible if you have a plan.

What's yours?

I would be interested in your views and if we can offer free advice on any issues that you have please mail me at paul@bodyshopsupport.co.uk

Kind Regards

Paul Goddard